DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 623 CS 509 468

AUTHOR Chung, Wendy V.
TITLE Challenges Confronting the Diversity Professor in Training Corporate America: A Matter of Theoretical or Practical Perspectives.
PUB DATE Nov 96
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (82nd, San Diego, CA, November 23-26, 1996).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Skills; *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Differences; Higher Education; Multicultural Education; *Organizational Communication; *Professional Training; Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Corporate Culture; *Diversity (Groups); *Organizational Culture; Persuasive Strategies

ABSTRACT

Diversity professionals who specialize in multiculturalism and organizational communication will embrace theories that yield a "managing diversity" approach to achieving organizational diversity. They know that the organization's culture holds the keys to the long-term success of diversity efforts. Diversity programs should be anchored on sound conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Communication professionals who teach multiculturalism in universities, conduct diversity issues research, and also conduct corporate diversity training may sometimes find themselves languishing between the theory-oriented, paradigmatic world of higher learning and the more pragmatic corporate world. They may encounter resistance from a corporation which views the systemic approach to be time consuming and costly and wants only to provide its employees training in valuing diversity. The communication professional must convince the corporate decision makers that diversity programs are unlike traditional training programs on which the organization generally embarks to teach employees organizational skills and procedures. For program developers, some theoretical understanding of the relationship between attitude and behavior can provide perspective on appropriate interventions. Of equal importance to the development of a theoretical foundation for programs is the understanding of how people receive and process persuasive messages embedded in diversity training. Those who attempt to influence the attitudes and behaviors of others must be cognizant that persuasion is not a linear, passive process. Also important are budgetary and time considerations. Creating a multicultural organization requires a systemic, developmental program whose success is, in part, contingent on management's full-scale, long-term commitment. (Contains 2 tables and 20 references.) (NKA)

ED 405 623

Challenges Confronting the Diversity Professor in Training Corporate America: A Matter of Theoretical or Practical Perspectives

Submitted to: The Commission of Training and Development,
Speech Communication Association (SCA)
SCA Convention, November 1996
c/o Mary Y. Mandeville
109 Morrill Hall
Department of Speech Communication
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater OK 74978

Submitted by: Wendy V. Chung
Department of Communication
Rider University
2083 Lawrenceville Rd.
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. Chung

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS509468

The debate over "valuing versus managing" diversity is a recent and interesting one which is fundamentally an argument for one approach to achieving true organizational diversity over another. The proponents of the "valuing diversity" approach argue that employees' misunderstanding of and lack of appreciation for human differences are obstacles to their organizational effectiveness. By focusing on awareness, attitude change, and self-empowerment, this approach employs diversity programs that rely on interpersonal tactics to "alter the fabric of relationships and enhance individuals' quality of work life, which in turn indirectly will improve productivity" (Banks ,1995, 49).

The arguments against this individual-level approach to diversity come from those who advocate that managing diversity is a more productive and holistic approach that occurs at the individual and group as well as the organizational levels. One avid advocate of the "managing diversity" approach is Roosevelt Thomas who suggests that successful diversity efforts occur only in an organization whose philosophy endorses multiculturalism. He insightfully muses that you cannot " grow peaches on an oak tree.... To grow peaches the roots must be peach-friendly" (1992, A-14). In essence, the holistic approach to managing diversity ensures the creation and managing of a multicultural organization whose culture facilitates and endorses corporate efforts aimed at training employees to value diversity (Chung, in press). The two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and in fact ought to be implemented in tandem to ensure the success of organizational diversity efforts.

Diversity professionals who specialize in multiculturalism and organizational communication will embrace theories that yield a "managing diversity" approach to achieving organizational diversity. They know that the organization's culture holds the keys to the long-term success of organizational diversity efforts. They are also keenly aware that diversity programs should be anchored on sound conceptual and theoretical frameworks that address the readjustments of the organization's culture to facilitate and endorse diversity. This is a systemic approach that, in some cases, will require large-scale organizational realignments which may not only appear to affect the organization's status-quo but may also seem to tamper with the existing power structure of the organization. This type of holistic approach therefore demands sincere commitment particularly from

the very top and certainly from all levels of the organization. A commitment of this type is more likely to evolve from a management that values the benefits of a multicultural organization and has an unwavering belief that the systemic approach holds the key to achieving it.

Communication professionals who teach multiculturalism in institutes of higher education, conduct research in issues of diversity and also conduct corporate diversity training may sometimes find themselves languishing between the theory-oriented, paradigmatic world of higher learning and the more pragmatic corporate world. They may encounter resistance from a corporation which may view the systemic approach to be too time-consuming and costly and may be seeking only to provide its employees training in valuing diversity. The communication professional must convince the corporate decision-makers that diversity programs are quite unlike the traditional training programs on which the organization generally embarks to teach employees organizational skills and procedures. They must be made aware that influencing individuals to appreciate diversity warrants efforts that address the fact that beliefs and attitudes toward human difference have been developed through generations of psychological, social, and cultural conditioning. Consequently, to affect this type of attitude within the organization, programs must be intensive and pervasive. They must operate at not only the individual level but also at the group and organizational levels. The organization must reflect, facilitate and endorse diversity.

A knowledge of the theories that underly the development and change of attitude toward human difference will facilitate an understanding of the theories that should influence the development of organizational diversity programs. This paper addresses the need for diversity professionals to develop and execute corporate diversity programs that are anchored on strong theoretical and conceptual foundations. It in turn discusses the theoretical foundation from which a systemic corporate diversity program should evolve, provides a framework for a plan of action and type of intervention for such a program, and identifies some of the obstacles that consultants may encounter while executing a program of this type.

*A Theoretical Foundation for Corporate Diversity Programs

The convergence of theory and practice has been aptly articulated by the psychologist Kurt Lewin who suggests that "there is nothing so practical as a good theory." A theory is an idea about how something works, and how something is done. Therefore, to not have theories is to act randomly (Banks, 1995).

As Corman (1990) argues, better theories produce improved practices. So when investing significant time and inordinate amounts of money in diversity training, as a number of corporations are doing, it seems an imperative that the training process ought to be anchored on a strong theoretical and conceptual framework. To do so implies the successful implementation of systemic diversity programs that use a coaching/ consultation-type intervention instead of the traditional small group, information-oriented type of training being conducted in corporations.

Many corporations' quest for diversity is motivated by their need to influence organizational members to value and respect human differences in an effort to maximize their ability to work together productively. In this case, training programs using small group settings are usually conducted in four phases: the first phase focuses on encouraging employees at all levels of the organization to identify their own stereotypes and to attempt to displace them. During the second phase, employees are allowed to build relationships with those within the group who they perceive are different from themselves, while the following phase emphasizes self-empowerment; at this time they are allowed to experience other's ideas and values usually through role-playing or simulations. The final phase is one in which the groups select strategies for working together interdependently; to achieve this, they identify and discuss group differences in detail (Walker, 1991).

These training strategies used in diversity progams of this type are effective. They certainly are appropriate for achieving their main objective which is to empower the employee to acquire ways of working productively with others who are unlike them. They do so by focusing on the individual as the unit of analysis and change in an attempt to positively influence his/her attitude toward human diversity. However, attitude changes produced by this type of program are susceptible to impermenance if the environment and culture in which they exist do not endorse and facilitate their longevity.

Programs that address diversity must not neglect the salience of organizational culture's influence on the values, attitudes and behaviors of its members. These programs must be anchored on strong theoretical foundations that underscores the importance of culture's role in the development and change of their attitudes toward human difference. These programs will also benefit from a theoretical framework which introduces and analyzes pertinent persuasive theories that provide a conceptual perspective for program development. In essence, an understanding of how attitudes develop can provide insights into how they can be influenced.

More specifically, the theories that need to be considered when developing a corporate diversity program include those that address: the relationship between culture, attitudes, and behavior; the role the organization's culture plays in the socialization and conditioning of its members; and the persuasive factors that are pertinent to the developing of a successful corporate diversity programs. The following section highlights these theories.

Culture and Attitudes Toward Diversity

Interculturalists strongly endorse the notion that we learn to interpret the world by observing the way people within our culture behave. Samovar and Porter in *Communication Across Culture* claim that it is "through this learned process, we not only develop the capacity to identify social objects and events, but also to give those objects and events meaning and value" (p.104). The culture in which we are raised predominantly determines our beliefs, which are the bases for our values. Individuals' cognitive structure consists of many values that are organized into a value system which has been defined by Rokeach (1973) as "an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-state existence along a continuum of relative importance" (p. 5). Samovar and Porter (1991) contend that "how we view our universe, our position in it, what we value, how we think, and how we behave within that universe are all products of cultural learning" (p.116).

Longstreet (1976) further suggests that we are conditioned and moulded by our national, scholastic and family ethnicities from the time of our birth to age twelve, the age at which we receive the capacity to intellectualize on our own. Between those early years, she says, the individual is most impressionable and is vulnerable to the internalizing of stimuli around

him/her. It is between those years we learn to cognize and to learn almost everything there is to know about behavior, value, meaning, and so on. Even when the individual attains the potential to intellectualize, Longstreet posits, he/she has little capacity to choose or to change anything that has been already assigned to his/her ethnic behavior pattern.

It is clear then that our value for and attitude toward human difference are enduring parts of our cognitive structure that have been determined during our early stages of life by the culture within which we grew and learned about the world. Certainly, any attempt to influence organizational members' behavior toward diversity will be challenging since it must incorporate techniques that address their culturally-determined values and attitudes. What ought to be of concern to diversity specialists is Longstreet's contention that attitudes, in the later stages of our life, are almost impervious to change. Most experts of persuasion would challenge this notion. They claim that persuasion is "the process of influencing attitudes and behavior" (Devito, 1986, p. 225); consequently, it is possible to influence individuals' attitudes and behavior toward diversity using the appropriate persuasive strategies.

For diversity program developers, some theoretical understanding of the relationship between attitude and behavior and some insight into how people receive and process persuasive messages can provide some perspective on the types of interventions that are appropriate for this venture.

Persuasion Theories and Diversity Programs

Attitudes have been the main feature in persuasion research. Dominant paradigms suggest that "attitude and attitude changes precede behavior and behavior change. This relationship has since been challenged as landmark studies conclude that conversely, according to Bem (1965, 1968, 1972), people often infer their attitudes from their behavior rather than their behavior from their attitude. One example of how behavior can lead to attitude change is evident in a forced compliance research conducted by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959). Parents "force" their children to take baths, brush their teeth, and eat properly. Eventually, these behaviors become the norm, and attitudes are formed to conform to them. The cognitive dissonance that we experience when attitudes and behaviors are not aligned impells us to monitor our actions and attitudes so that they coincide. If our

attitudes are invulnerable to change, then we change our behaviors to conform to our attitudes.

Although people generally change their behavior to conform to their attitudes they oftentimes change their attitudes to align with their behavior. Thus, if organizations require that culturally different people work closely together, are treated equally within the organization, and are applauded for their unique contributions to the organization's goals, such behaviors will eventually become ingrained in the organization's culture and result in employees' new and positive attitude toward diversity.

This behavior-to-attitude paradigm has significant implications for the development of corporate diversity programs. It suggests that such programs must focus on the organization's culture as one of the units of analysis and a source of change in employees' attitude toward diversity.

Factors that Affect the Development of Persuasive Messages

Of equal importance to the development of a theoretical foundation for diversity programs is the understanding of some insightful factors that explain how people receive and process the persuasive messages embedded in the diversity training they receive: 1) The extent to which trainees react to diversity training is related to the extent to which they are self-interested and the extent to which they believe that the actions or attitudes that the training emphasizes helps them to achieve personal rewards and avoid undesirable outcomes.

2) Diversity trainees are capable of resisting message that they may perceive as being contradictory to group or organizational norms. This implies that trainees who identify the contradictions in organizational philosophy, norms, policies, and procedures with the notion of the diversity for which they are being trained will reject the training.

3) People can be influenced by subtle social cues that exist in the environment within which they work. An organization that operates on a multicultural philosophy will inevitably have a culture that reflects and endorses diversity. Consequently, both subtle and overt cues that applaud human diversity will pervade the organization and will certainly impact on the subconscious of its members.

4) Persuading organizational members to appreciate human diversity and informing them about the dynamics of human difference are approaches

that ought to be inextricably intertwined. Studies have concluded that information is invaluable to persuasive impact (Heath & Bryant, 1992). Beliefs that are founded on extensive information are resistant to change (Danes, 1978). It then would be profitable for diversity training programs to provide trainees with a wealth of knowledge about the cultural, psychological, social and cognitive dynamics that underly differences among human beings. This type of information will enhance their abilities to adopt positive attitudes and behaviors toward diversity within the organization.

Taken together, these factors provide a framework of influence for approaching the implementation of organizational diversity programs. In essence, these factors suggest that those who attempt to influence the attitudes and behaviors of others must be cognizant that persuasion is not a linear, passive process in which the persuader creates and sends a persuasive signal that the persuadee passively receives, processes and acts upon. In fact, the process of influencing someone to alter an attitude or action is fraught with challenges; one of the most important being the resistance of the recipient to even accept the persuasive message or appeal.

Those who embark on diversity intervention programs must pay attention to the behavior-to-attitude paradigm that suggests the influence of the organization's culture on the behavior and attitudes of its members. They need also to consider the basic persuasion factors that posit that trainees will respond to training that they perceive to be personally beneficial and rewarding to their own lives. Also to be considered, is the notion that organizational members can be subconsciously persuaded by subtle influences from the environment in which they exist and respond effectively to cues that they do not perceive as persuasive. Consequently, they will resist overt information or messages that appear to contradict the cues that they receive from the organization's philosophy, norms and procedures.

This theoretical framework unveils the organization's culture as a major source of influence in the process of influencing organizations' members to value diversity. It suggests that attitudes and behaviors toward diversity are enduring, and any attempt to influence them demands a persuasive approach that embraces the individual and also the organization's culture as units of change. Strategies therefore must be extensive and pervasive and must underscore the symbiotic relationship between the "valuing and managing" of diversity.

The organization's culture is, to a significant extent, responsible for the socialization of employees. According to Banks (1995), socialization "is the process of making individuals into organizational members;... it is the core of team building" (p. 52). The organization's culture provides its members with numerous socializing opportunities throughout their lives within the organization. The culture operates at three different levels in the organization and inculcates its members through mechanisms that pervade the organization. It is then easy to understand organizational culture's potential to influence its members to adopt positive attitudes and behaviors toward culturally different colleagues in the organization.

Organizational Culture and Diversity

Organizational culture is what is typical of the organization: its habits; prevailing attitudes and the pattern of accepted behavior. Culture equals "how things are done around here." In the organization, people develop certain ways of handling recurrent work-related and social functions which over time become the way to do things.

Culture is a multilevel construct which consists of basic assumptions/ world views, values and tangible artifacts that are manifestations of the culture. Organizational philosophy, values, rites and rituals, norms, and procedures all exist on three different levels (see Table 1). At the deepest level is the organization's basic, taken-for-granted assumptions or ideologies which are the essence of the culture. These include its assumptions and philosophy about human nature, individuals' relationship with each other, the organization's relationship with the environment, the nature of organizational change, organizational homogeneity versus diversity, the value of information and training, among others. These assumptions are invisible and are taken-for-granted. However, all actions are unconsciously executed and judged based on these deeply-held assumptions (Chung, in press). For example, a multicultural organization embraces the assumption that heterogeneity of groups ensures diversity in opinions and perspectives and consequently guarantees productivity. In this case, organizational actions will support this underlying assumption.

The second level of organizational culture is characterized by the organizational values, goals, ideals and standards that evolve from the basic assumptions and ideologies found at the deepest level. They may include

Table 1: The Three Levels of Organizational Culture of Diversity

LEVEL 1

ORGANIZATION'S ARTIFACTS/TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF CULTURE:
rites, rituals, policies, procedures, physical layout,
heroes, ceremonies, social events, communication networks,
communication climate will reflect the value for diversity and the embrace of the multicultural philosophy

---

LEVEL 11

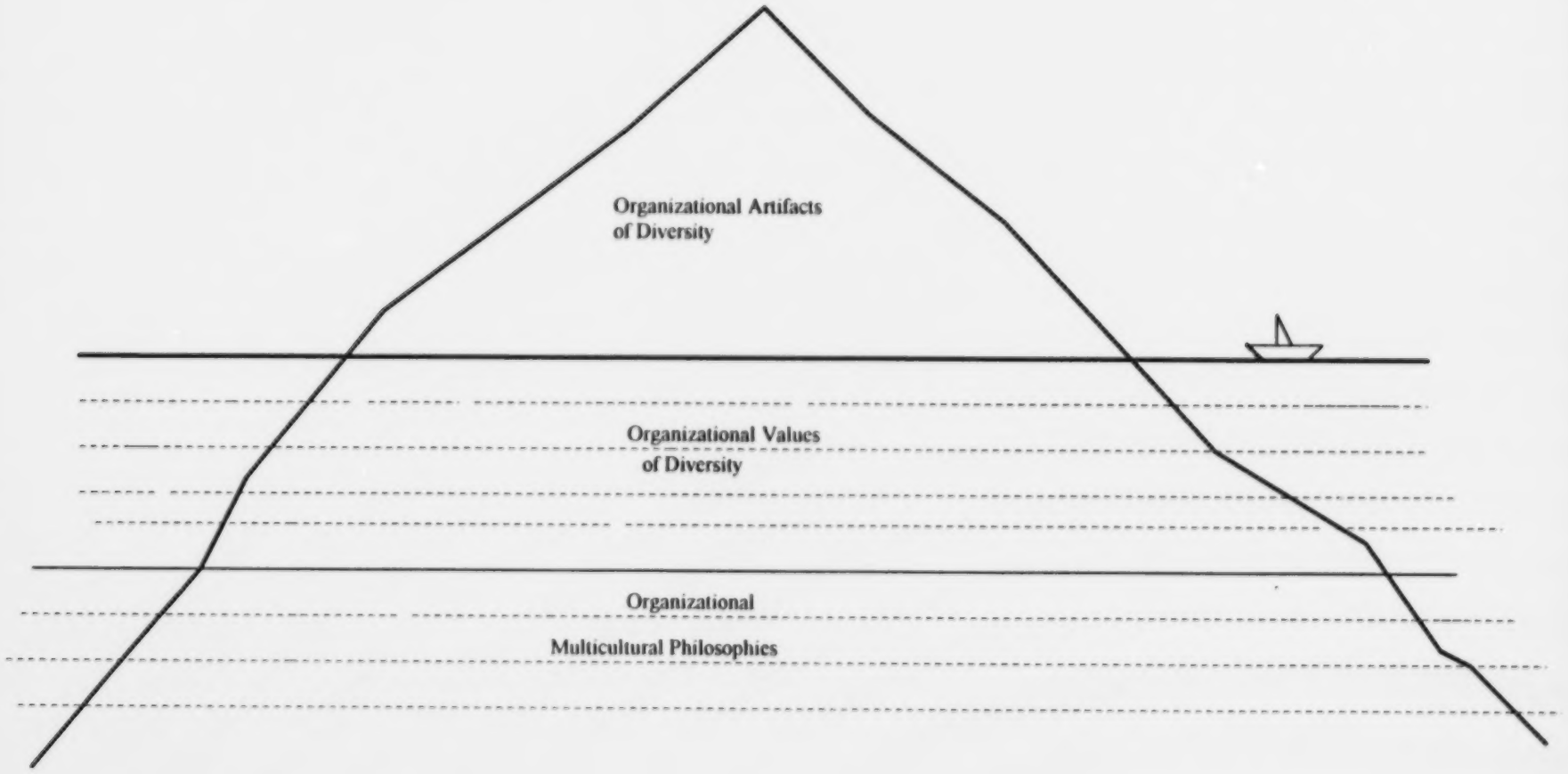
ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:
for diversity related to human nature, the environment,
human relationships, workforce composition,
information and training.

LEVEL 111

ORGANIZATION'S BASIC ASSUMPTIONS/IDEOLOGIES:
related to human nature,
individuals' relationship with each other,
the organization's relationship with the environment,
the nature of organizational change,
organizational homogeneity versus diversity,
the value of information and training, and others which will reflect a multicultural philosophy

---

Figure 1: The Cultural Iceberg - Three Levels of Organizational Culture of Diversity



values related to human nature, the environment, activity and time, human relationships, workforce composition, and information and training, among others. It constitutes the shared rules, norms, and elements that define acceptable organizational behavior.

Values at this level are susceptible to physical and or/social validation. Those values that are testable in the physical environment usually evolve from the initial successful organizational action or procedures of a key member of the organization, usually the manager or company founder. He/she might have strong evidence that heterogeous teams are more productive than homogeneous teams and consequently ensures that organizational procedures continue to reflect it. Organizational members endorse these actions/procedures as the "correct" way to do things. They subsequently begin a process of "cognitive transformation" in which they become organizational values and ultimately "basic assumptions." Values that are susceptible to social validation are those that are the less controllable elements of the environment. These elements may be socially endorsed because the group has learned, through experience, the values that reduce conflict and uncertainty and maintain group sanctity and effectiveness. They might have realized that diversity increases the quality of their organizational life while enhancing productivity. They may then value the existence of diversity in their organization.

At the surface and most visible level of the culture is, according to Schein (1985, 1991), its constructed physical and social environment. Among these elements are: the physical layout of the organization, the organization's rites and rituals which are the "rules" for getting along in the organization, the organization's heroes and events that are celebrated, its policies and programs that emphasize its values, and the social and task-related environment (climate) created by the physical layout and by the nature of the communication among organizational members.

A Profile of an Organizational Culture of Diversity:

Diversity program specialists must develop programs that address the realignment of the organization's culture to conform to the diversity training that its members are receiving. The organization that values diversity usually reflects this through it physical layout that ought to represent the various cultures within the organization. It will possess rites and rituals that evolve

from the unique and successful ways that the culturally different employees get things done. Organizational procedures will be flexible enough to include the unique contributions of all its members. In this type of organization, policies will emphasize its value for diversity, and its programs will be developed around social and informational multicultural events in an effort to achieve true organizational diversity.

In the multicultural organization, heroes, past and present will include those who are recognized for their significant contributions to diversity while ceremonies and celebrations would also evolve around individuals' attempts and successes at achieving diversity. Communication networks will reflect member's respect and value for human difference creating a climate in which members would applaud and respect each other's differences in work-related and social situations. There would also be an absence of strong cliques that form along lines of gender, nationality, race, age, or physical status, among others. Management and employees will perceive the culturally diverse work team as an asset to production.

These cultural elements exist at the surface level of the organization, are extremely pervasive and consequently are capable of shaping the values, attitudes, and behavior of the organizational member who then becomes enculturated into the organization. Diversity experts then can ensure success of their programs if they endorse Deal and Kennedy's (1982) contention that "the business of change is cultural transformation (p. 164). By creating an organizational culture of diversity, according to Loden and Rosener (1991), one creates an environment built on the values of fairness, diversity, mutual respect, understanding, and coorperation; where goals, rewards, performance standards, operating norms, and a common vision of the future will guide the efforts of all employees (p.196). An organizational culture of diversity facilitates and ensures the success of valuing diversity programs; it provides trainees with environmental cues and subtle reinforcements of the messages that they receive through diversity training.

A Diversity Program Plan

The key to developing successful diversity programs is to be functionally aware of how our behavior is culturally determined. It is also is important to know that the individual exists within many cultures, one of

which is the organization within which he/she works. The organization's culture plays as salient a role as the other cultures in socializing and enculturating its members. It plays an equally important role as the organizational member in acheiving the goals of diversity programs. Consequently, the organizational member, groups of organizational members, and the organization as a whole should be the focus of diversity programs.

Planning a diversity program that addresses all levels of the organization involves following a well structured program that moves the consultant logically from first determining the goal of the program, then identifying its objectives and strategies and finally, selecting appropriate program tactics as shown in Table 2

The Goal of the Diversity Program

The initial step in formulating a corporate diversity program is to fine-tune the goal that the specialist is called on to achieve. This sometimes is more challenging that is expected. Usually the organization's decision-makers are unaware of the holistic nature of the program that they need. The refining of the program's goal usually occurs during discussions between the diversity consultant and the organization's decision makers. In these discussions the consultant may have to convince the decision makers that one of the imperatives of the program is to audit and, if necessary, to realign the organization's culture to endorse and facilitate the training that the organzation's members are to receive.

The refined goal of the diversity programs may be: *to create a multicultural organization which facilitates and endorses the training that organizational members receive to help them understand and value diversity and consequently increase their ability to function productively within that multicultural organization.*

In summary, the program's goal ought to be to create a multicultural environment which endorses members value for diversity, enhances organizational life and increases productivity.

Table 2: The Diversity Program Plan

The Goal

To create a multicultural organization in which diversity enhances organizational life and increases productivity

Objective #1	Objective #2	Objective #3
To heighten organizational members' sensitivity to the manifestations of culture so that they will be able to efficiently analyze, respond to and value multicultural dynamics in the organization	To create and organizational culture that endorses the multi-cultural training that its members receive	To include organizational members in the creating of an organizational culture of diversity
Strategy #1	**Strategy #1**	**Strategy #1**
Train organizational members to respect and value diversity	Audit the organizational culture's systems to assess their potential for diversity	Coach groups of organizational members in creating a multi-cultural organization.
Tactics	**Tactics**	**Tactics**
Training employs both cognitive and affective tactics: Lecturettes, simulations, exercises, role playing, discussions, case studies to learn culture, perception, communication, identity, cultural awareness, etc.	Conducting an audit of the organ-ization's cultural systems via interviews, group discussions, surveys, content analysis, etc.	Communicating results/findings to various groups in the organiza-tion via discussions, coaching, etc.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Diversity Program Objectives

After formulating the program's goal, the consultant must identify exactly what they want to accomplish specified as objectives. It is important that program objectives and the corporation's objectives converge. If they do not, the relationship between the consultants and the organization can either be negotiated or terminated.

Objectives that evolve from program goals must be specific enough to ensure that their successes are measurable. For example, objectives used to achieve the above goal may be:

1) To heighten organizational members' sensitivity to the manifestation of culture so that they can be empowered to strategically combine their unique ways of doing things for the benefit of the organization's goals.

2) To create an organization whose culture facilitates and endorses the positive values and attitude toward diversity for which the organizatinal members were trained.

3) To include organizational members in the process of creating of an organizational culture of diversity.

These three objectives seek to achieve the program's goal by intervening at the individual, group and organizational levels. They can be attempted systematically or simultaneously.

Diversity Program Strategies

Once the objectives have been determined and approved, the consultants must identify strategies that would best achieve them. The strategies are specific methods used to achieve each of the program's objectives. For example, the strategies that can be employed to realize above objectives include:

Objective #1:

To heighten organizational member's sensitivity to the manifestation of culture so that they can be empowered to find ways to strategically combine their unique ways of doing things for the benefit of the organization's goals.

Strategy #1:

Train organizational members to understand, respect and value diversity within the organization.

In this case organizational members would receive intensive training that facilitates their understanding of all the dynamics that determine

diversity. This awareness will help them to respect and possibly value diversity.

Objective #2:
To create an organizational culture that endorses the multicultural training that its members receive.
Strategy #2:
Conduct an audit of the organizational culture's systems to assess their potential for diversity.

The extensiveness of this audit is influenced by the degree to which the organization is monocultural. It however is a necessary step in the creation of an organization whose systems' norms, policies, procedures, rites and rituals endorse the diversity perspectives for which its members are being trained.

Objective #3:
To include organizational members in the process of creating of an organizational culture of diversity.
Strategy #3:
Coach groups of organizational members in creating a multicultural organization.

This is a critical step in influencing organizational members to value organizational diversity. Utilizing their human resources in this very important organizational function can prove to be an enlightening experience for the company. It can make clear to members the importance of diversity at every level of the organization. It can also stimulate their commitment to diversity as they become an integral part of creating their organization's culture in which diversity can flourish (Chung, in press).

These strategies can work best when executed simultaneously or within the same time frames. It will serve to reinforce each other and provide organizational members with intensive cognitive and affective exposure to diversity efforts.

Diversity Program Tactics
There is an array of tactics available to the diversity consultant as he/she plans the program. Again, each objective must be addressed separately when identifying appropriate strategies and tactics. One most important prerequisite

to determining program tactics is to define and analyze the audience (organization members' demographics and psychographics). Within each organization, there are several loci of culture that range from age, seniority, department, gender, nationality, race, among others. It is critical that the consultant gives credence to these co-cultures as he/ she selects the tactics to be employed in the execution of this program.

Different groups respond quite differently to training tactics. For instance, one tactic might work for employees of one age group or level in the organization but might not work for another. This certainly provides the consultant with the challenge of conducting successful audience analyses prior to the identification of appropriate tactics.

An example of some tactics that can be employed in a diversity program follows:

Strategy #1:
Train organizational members to understand, respect, and value diversity within their organization.
Tactic #1:
Techniques: lecturettes, simulations, exercises, role playing, discussions, case studies. Issues: Culture, perception, communication, cultural awareness, self identity, etc,

Training in this case must employ both cognitive and affective tactics which ensure the experiential reinforcement of the information they receive through lectures and discussions. Certainly, the topics are not limited to those mentioned.

Strategy #2:
Auditing the organizational culture's systems to assess their potential for diversity.
Tactic #2:
Conducting an audit of the organization's cultural systems via interviews, group discussions, content analysis, network analysis and observations techniques.

Using these techniques, an audit team must be formed to conduct an organizational culture audit. The audit identifies organizational systems which operate at the surface level and which contradict the multicultural

philosophy that the organization seeks to embrace. The organization may choose to use an audit team comprised of both an external diversity consultant and a team of organizational members from a cross section of departments, seniority level, age groups, genders, ethnic groups, professions, and/or educational level.

Strategy #3:

Coach groups of organizational members in creating a multicultural organization.

Tactic #3:

Communicating audit results/findings to the various groups in the organization and guiding them to appropriate solutions via discussions, coaching. The audit team is responsible for communicating the findings of the audit to organizational members. With the guidance of the diversity consultant, this ought to be a collaborative effort in which audit team members and the groups of organizational members convene to discuss the findings and to determine what organization cultural systems that are to be adjusted. The consultant can coach/guide organizational members in the use of organizational cultural adjustment techniques as they attempt to create an organizational culture of diversity.

Diversity Program Budgetary and Time Considerations

Two critical considerations in this program plan are the timetable and the cost to implement such a program. It is important to have a timetable that specifies the duration of each aspect of the program. This allows organizational decision-makers to know the nature and duration of the intervention process as they plan and conduct their organizational functions. It also helps to keep the audit team focused and organized.

The cost of the program must be detailed so that decision-makers could decide on the manner in which the funds can be allocated. At this time, they determine if the program objectives align with the program cost. The organization's final decision about the cost of the program will certainly have an impact on the execution of the program.

Planning this type of diversity program takes ingenuity and creativity. However, the critical ingredient in planning and developing a successful program is a strong theoretical foundation which provides the theories,

paradigms and perspectives from which program objectives, strategies and tactics can evolve.

Theoretically strong diversity programs are almost guaranteed to create multicultural organizations in which their organizational members understand, respect and value diversity. They create organizations in which the human resources of their culturally diverse workforce enhance organizational life and increase productivity.

Organizational Response to the Systemic Diversity Program

Creating a multicultural organization requires a systemic, developmental program whose success is, in part, contingent on management's full-scale, long-term commitment to it. This type of management commitment is influenced by the extent to which the organization embraces the multicultural philosophy and is optimistic that this systemic approach can successfully achieve the multicultural organization that they seek.

The consultant who embarks on this type of program must initially determine the extent to which upper management is committed to its implementation. He/ she must openly discuss the systemic nature of the program and its speculated impact on the everyday functioning of the organization and on the organizational lives of its members. If management's response to the program proposal is not enthusiastic or positive, the diversity consultant must then decide whether to terminate the relationship, negotiate common program objectives or to simply execute the program that management desires.

In the event that upper management makes a strong commitment to implement the systemic program, the consultant must nevertheless be prepared to encounter some organizational obstacles as he/she carries the program through to completion. There may be some organizational members who do not initially embrace the notion of multiculturalism or the advantages of diversity; it would therefore be challenging for them to accept the systemic nature of this diversity program which they would perceive to be tampering with the organizational status quo. Some may then tend to exhibit varied degrees of resistance to the program and may complain that the program activities interfere with their daily organizational functions. Other members of upper management can begin to fluctuate on their initial

commitment to the program. This can occur because of their concern that the notion of organizational members actively contributing to the creation of the organization's culture will result in a transfer of organizational power from their hands to the hands of those organizational members who they manage and direct.

It is unrealistic to believe that all members at every level of the organization will be equally committed to this diversity program intervention. Certainly, attitudes toward this program can vary across co-cultures that exist within the organization. However, with upper management's full commitment, the diversity consultant can incorporate their assistance in identifying the loci of resistance and addressing the respective concerns which, through negotiation, may produce novel program procedures tailored for specific groups.

Diversity consultants must recognize that their function is to facilitate organizational members' awareness and understanding of the key role that culture plays in the creation of a multicultural organization. As they interview, question, observe, discuss with, and coach organizational members during this program, consultants should not employ any obtrusive techniques that interfer with the organization's functions. They must attempt to conform with the existing culture and be prepared to negotiate new program techniques and procedures with every level or co-culture within the organization.

Conclusion

Corporate diversity programs are generally oriented toward training. Training is traditional, manageable, and does not significantly interfere with the organization's status-quo. Perhaps these are the reasons why specialists in the field of diversity and intercultural communication who are employed by corporations to conduct diversity programs invariably embark on the training approach to diversity. They tend to neglect the salience of a strong theoretical foundation in the successful development of systemic diversity programs that address all levels of the organization.

Diversity experts ought to know that the keys to influencing organizational members to value diversity on a long-term basis is to create a multicultural organization whose systems endorse and facilitate their

acquired attitude toward human difference. A program that evolves from a strong theoretical foundation yields objectives that address the individual, the group as well as the organization as the units of change.

The multicultural organization is one that operates on the basic assumption and philosophy that the unique contributions of culturally diverse individuals can enhance the functioning and productivity of any task group or organization. The multicultural individual is one who understands, respects, values, and oftentimes, seeks out culturally different individuals and experiences. The diversity consultant's function then is to develop a program which facilitates the creation of a multicultural organization that yields multicultural employees.

Theory-oriented diversity professionals who conduct diversity programs in the corporate world may, on occasions, find themselves compromising theoretical mandates as they develop corporate diversity programs. These professionals, however, are ethically responsible for making decision-makers aware of the role that the organization's culture plays in the long-term success of any attempts at diversity. They ought to initially present a proposal that advances a systemic program for diversity. In this way, decision-makers can make an informed decision on the program that they seek.

Ideally, professionals must align themselves with corporations that are truly committed to creating multicultural organizations that facilitate diversity efforts. These organizations are more likely to endorse a systemic program approach. However, in the real world, diversity professionals may opt to embark on programs that are not founded on a strong theoretical foundation and do not yield systemic diversity programs. In light of this, some may feel that they are compromising their professional intergrity in order to meet the demands of the organization's decision-makers. A professional dilemma, to say the least!

References

Banks, S. P. (1995). Multicultural public relations: A social-interpretive approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Bem, D. J. (1965). An experimental analysis of self-persuasion. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1, 199-218.

Bem, D. J. (1968). Attitudes as self-descriptions: Another look at the attitude-behavior link. In A. G. Greenwald, T. C. Brock, & T. M. Ostrom (Eds.), Psychological Foundations of attitudes (pp. 197-215). New York: Academic Press.

Bem, D. J. (1972). Self-perception theory. In Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 6, pp. 2-63). New York: Academic Press.

Chung, W. V. (in press). Auditing the organizational culture for diversity: A conceptual framework. in C. D. Brown, Conflict and diversity. NJ: Hampton Press.

Corman, S. R. (1990). That works fine in theory but.... In S. R. Corman, S. P. Banks, C. R. Bantz, & M. E. Mayer (Eds.) Foundations of organizational communication: A reader (p. 3-10). New York: Longman.

Danes, J. E. (1978). Communication models of the message-beblief change process. In B. D. Roben (Ed.), Communication yearbook 2 (pp. 109-124). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life . Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc.

Devito, J. A. (1986). The communication handbook: A dictionary. New York: Harper & Row.

Festinger, L. & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58, 203-210.

Heath, R. L. & Bryant, J. (1992). Human communication theory and research: Concepts, contexts, and challenges . Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., Inc.

Katz, J. H. (1989). The challenge of diversity. In C. Woolbright (Ed.) Valuing diversity on campus: A multicultural approach . Bloomington: Association of College Unions-International.

Loden, M. & Rosener, J. B. (1991). Workforce America! Managing employee diversity as a vital resource. Homewood, IL: Business One Irwin.

Longstreet, W. (1976). Aspects of ethnicity: Understanding differences in pluralistic classrooms. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Rokeach, M. (1973). The nature of human values. New York: Free Press.

Samovar, L. A., & Porter, R. E. (1991). Communication between cultures. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.

Schein, E. H. (1985). Organizational culture and leadership. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Schein, E. H. (1991). What is culture? In P. J. Frost, L. F. Moore, M. K. Louis, C. C. Lundberg, & J. A. Martin (Eds.), Reframing organizational culture (pp. 243-253) Newburg Park, CA: Sage.

Thomas, R.R. (1992). From affirmative action to affirming diveristy. In D. O'Hair & W. F. Gustav (Auth.) Strategic communication in business and professions. Boston, MA: Houghton Miffin Co.

Walker, B. A. (1991). Valuing differences: The concept and a model. In M. A. Smith & S. J. Johnson (Eds.), Diversity differences in the workplace (p. 7-16). Alexandria, VA: ASTD.